

Derek Wallbank, *MinnPost*

WASHINGTON - The House today passed a stand-alone repeal of the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy, setting up a showdown vote in the Senate on the policy that allows gays and lesbians to serve in the military only if they hide their sexual orientation.

Minnesota's delegation split exactly down the middle, 4-4, on the measure. Democrat Tim Walz, the most senior enlisted man in Congress, was a yes, as were fellow Dems Keith Ellison, Betty McCollum and Jim Oberstar.

Republican Rep. John Kline, who served 25 years in the Marines, was a no, as were fellow Republicans Michele Bachmann and Erik Paulsen, as well as Democratic Rep. Collin Peterson.

The key vote will be in the Senate, where last week the Defense Authorization bill that contained a DADT repeal narrowly failed to secure the necessary 60 votes to beat back a filibuster attempt. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has pledged to hold a vote on the House bill some time in the lame duck session.

The House vote proved this is now or not for a while for DADT repeal - unless the incoming frosh (most of whom are very conservative Republicans) are more pro-repeal than the members they replaced - the House in January won't have the votes to repeal the measure. My back-of-the-napkin estimate is that they'd be down about 40 votes or so.